



## **Pasteurized Donor Human Milk For Your Baby**

The Mothers' Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes (Milk Bank WGL) is your local milk bank. It is a nonprofit that serves families in Wisconsin and Illinois.

### **Importance of Mother's Own Milk**

Mother's own milk is the best food for babies. It protects against illnesses and helps babies grow. Babies that receive their parent's milk are less likely to get some diseases than babies who are fed formula. However, sometimes mother's own milk is not available. Also, sometimes the nurse or doctor will recommend extra feedings. If your own milk is not available, there are two feeding choices: donor milk or formula.

### **Benefits**

Babies who are fed donor milk instead of formula may tolerate feedings better. Donor milk has many important factors that keep your baby healthy, like special proteins called antibodies. It also has sugars that fight against harmful bacteria. These may help create a healthy balance of bacteria in your baby's stomach. These important factors are not found in formula. Your baby's provider has determined there are more benefits of using donor milk than risks.

### **Milk Donors**

Milk donors are mothers who choose to share their extra milk with others in need. These parents follow special instructions for collecting and storing their milk. Donors are asked questions about their health over the phone and through email. They are screened for medications and diseases that can be passed into milk. Donors also have their blood tested for HIV and other diseases.

### **Milk Bank Safety**

When donor milk comes to the milk bank, it is tested for bacteria and drugs. It is then pasteurized, which means it is treated with heat to kill bacteria and viruses. Many important factors that are good for the immune system stay in the milk. They may help protect babies against disease. The milk bank follows strict guidelines from several agencies to keep the milk safe. These include the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA). There has never been a case of bacteria in donor milk in HMBANA's 30-year history of milk banking.